

How the Story Goes

by ranibowscarf

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Summary: Early this morning, Supergirl saved National City. She didn't make it home.

## 1. Chapter 1

Disclaimer: I own nothing.

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><p>Rolling her eyes at the lack of her assistant media mogul Cat Grant indulged in wondering where Kiera had gotten off to once again. Sighing she held her tongue, she didn't need to hear Witt stumbling through some pathetic regalement of Kiera's fictitious ineptitude with the copier.<p>

She blustered for a moment glaring at the cardigan hobbit. Just as she reached the door of her office she heard the elevator. A biting comment regarding millennial's punctuality or lack thereof died on her lips as she turned.

"Ah Lucy, I'm sorry but I've already filed the position you so hastily vacated."

Major Lane stood before her in full uniform, her mouth in a grim line looking rather worse for the wear in Cat's opinion.

"I'm not here for that Ms Grant. I need to speak with you in private."

"So you just decided to flounce into my office and demand I rearrange my schedule? A bit presumptuous don't you agree? Schedule an appointment with my assistant, whenever she decides to show"

Lucy bristled at the comment shooting a mournful glance to Kara's empty desk. A glance that Cat did not miss. Interesting.

"Although i suppose I'm free until my eleven o'clock meeting with the board. Very well, Major Lane how can I be of service?"

Briefly meeting the worried eyes of Winn, Lucy tightens her jaw, schooling her face in an attempt to maintain her composure.

"This is private Cat."

Lucy leads Cat to her desk pausing to ensure the door was firmly closed behind them.

"At oh three hundred today Supergirl saved National City form a missile. She was unable to release the weapon. It."

Lucy paused, breathing deeply to take the edge out of her voice, persevering as if she was not on the brink of tears.

"It's homing system kept redirecting it to the city. She flew as far as she could and never let it go. We, we are still looking for her however it's not likely that she survived. She deserves for the city to remember her as a hero. That's why I'm bringing this story to you."

Cat closed her eyes. Of course she'd been fighting as hard as she could to change the narrative currently framing Supergirl. While she was sure she wouldn't fail it was taking an annoyingly long time for the sheep to follow. This changed everything. She wanted Supergirl to once again be a symbol of hope, not a martyr.

"We are doing everything that we can but I think that this city deserves to know. She deserves for the city to know what she's done."

Cat's silence only served to ignite Lucy's sense of duty. She knew Kara, and she knew that out of everyone Kara would want Cat to break the story. Kara had dedicated so much of herself to Cat Grant as both Kara Danvers and Supergirl, it only seemed fitting.

" please know that I wouldn't share this with you under normal circumstances."

With a steady hand she reached into her pocket, pulled out a flash drive, and placed it on the table.

Cat cast a suspicious glance at the device before turning her gaze onto Lucy who had spent enough time at Catco to be aware of her policy on handing her such things.

"These could be Supergirl's last words, you owe it to her to listen. She says your name, there's a message for you. For her sister, for her mother, for her friends and loved ones. She left a message for this city and we should carry her final words with us."

Cat's heart was thundering in her chest as she stared at the flash drive containing what she could only assume was an audio file. Lucy made no move to leave and with a sigh Cat realized that she wasn't going to until they'd listened to every second. Despite the weight in her chest and rolling of her stomach Cat knew, that she would listen as many times as she could. If Supergirl really was gone then she

owed it to the hero to be with her in those last moments in any way that she could. To cling to the life that had been freely given to save a city.

"Does this have confidential information that could compromise Supergirl's identity?"

Lucy glanced up at Cat for a moment, that was a surprisingly considerate inquiry.

"Yes."

Crossing her arms over her chest Cat glared

"Then I don't want to hear it. I refuse to compromise her identity until we know for sure that she's not coming back. I'm not going to destroy something that she has so obviously fought to keep."

For the first time Cat noticed the tears that were pooling around Lucy's eyes as they made eye contact across her desk.

"Superman, the coast guard, the navy, and several other organizations have been searching every inch of sea. We haven't found a trace, all evidence indicates that there is no way for her to have survived that blast."

"You're still looking."

"It's personal. She's a friend, more than a friend, a role model and she is the kindest person I know. I can't accept that she's just gone. I will have as many people out looking for her for as long as I can because I owe that to her. Still, the reality of this situation is that it is very likely that we're never going to see her again. Even if we do, I'm not exposing her and I'm not asking you to expose her. I'm asking you to bring coverage to the fact that at this time all evidence indicates that she sacrificed herself to save this city. Maybe people when they realize what they've lost will begin to appreciate what they had."

Cat stood slowly, walked heavily to her cabinet each step carrying a weight much greater than her own. As she poured a glass of whisky for herself she swallowed thickly schooling her face and steadying her voice before returning.

"You believe that it's necessary for me to listen to this recording in order to understand the situation that we are in?"

Lucy nodded. Cat finally noticed the red rims around her eyes.

"I think that in order for you to report this Cat, you need to hear her."

There was that incessant drumming in her chest that did nothing to alleviate the tension of the situation. This was not how she imagined her morning would go. Suddenly Kara's absence seemed far more pronounced, the blonde had a calming effect, for the most part. Briefly she glanced at the empty desk outside of her office before nodding at Lucy to play the file.

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><p>I've also posted this work on A03. Thanks for reading. Let me know what you think.<p>

## 2. Chapter 2

"Do you know how there are moments when the world moves so slowly you can feel your bones shifting, your mind tumbling? When you think that no matter what happens to you for the rest of your life, you will remember every last detail of that one minute forever?"  
>â€• Jodi Picoult<p>

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><p>"Vasquez, Lucy, I need a way to disarm this thing. It's super heavy, guys. I can barely hang on."<p>

Supergirl sounded upbeat if not a little winded, and Cat wondered who Supergirl's ground team was.

"Supergirl, we're working on it, while we do can you buy us some time?"

Cat found it interesting that they whatever blacklist unofficial department of the government this was they still didn't use Supergirl's real name.

"Buy you some time how?"

She didn't miss that Supergirl was struggling, her voice strained. The roaring of wind was almost overwhelming in the background.

"Reroute it, change the direction that it's flying in. That way if it detonates it's over water."

She could almost imagine the look on Kara's face, any time that she requested something that she believed to be impossible. Kara's brow would be furrowed, torn between what she believed her limits to be and what the occasion called for. Glancing to her right for a moment, Cat noted that her assistant's desk was still empty.

"Alright, I can try but this thing is seriously heavy. I'm not sure if I'm going to be able to move this."

Ever eager to save the day. Kara's response had always been a similar willingness to try, with uncertainty regarding the outcome. The few times she had braved Cat's ire with voicing her concerns the response had always been that Cat Grant didn't believe in failure, and would not accept anything less than resounding success from both herself and her subordinates.

"You can do this. Please, a weapon of that size would destroy the entire city. We'd lose over a million people. We are doing everything that we can, but we need you to buy us some time."

Cat doubted that Supergirl needed the pep talk.

"There's a timer counting down for fifteen minutes."

It's barely audible, but Cat catches the intake of breath followed by a rapid smashing of fingers on a keyboard.

"It will hit National City in four, that's eleven minutes that we have to spare. Give us as much time as you can. Major Lane, I need the kill codes to deactivate the missile that is en-route to National City."

There's a few seconds of silence, followed by shuffling. Cat can hear voices in the background before this Agent Vasquez returns.

"Supergirl, can you hear me?"

"Yes, but it's everything that I can do to hold this I'm just barely knocking it off course."

Her voice is strained with effort. Cat can picture the hero clad in blue and red struggling against a missile the size of her body. She knew that this was a ridiculous notion, she had no way of knowing the size of the missile.

"Just do everything that you can, please. We all have loved ones in this city that we want to protect."

Supergirl laughed, breathing heavily.

"What you did for me, and for Alex the other day, thank you."

"I don't know what you're talking about Supergirl."

Kara laughed a bit before a pregnant pause.

"Vasquez, I'm at nine minutes. What's the word on the deactivation code? This thing isn't easy to hold down."

Briefly Cat felt a rush of affection for Supergirl, calling Leslie a "mean girl," referring to the weapon that could have claimed her life as a thing.

"We're doing everything that we can, You're 400 miles from the city, wait no. Three hundred and ninety two? Kara, everything okay?"

Kara?

"Sorry, it slipped. I promise you Vasquez, National City is safe. But."

There was silence for a moment the sound of wind racing. Cat's mind raced as well, surely she had heard incorrectly. She'd seen both Kara and Supergirl in the same room, at the same time, together.

"Kara."

The next sound Cat heard was a slight giggle half a step too high wavering with fear. As her mind processed the name that had been uttered in the communication her head snapped up sharply as she made

eye contact with Major Lane, before she could say anything Supergirl's solemn voice rang through the room.

"I'm at five minutes."

The response from Vasquez sounded frenzied and filled with worry. Cat shot a desperate glance to Kara's empty desk, 'please be there.'

"Kara, just hold on a little longer okay? Major Lane is doing everything that she can to get the kill code."

For a moment all Cat heard was silence and she wondered if the communication feed ended there.

"I'm getting this thing as far away from the city just in case she can't."

Her sharp intake of breath matched that of 'Agent Vasquez.'

"Kara, this is a missile. A blast that strong, I know you're bullet proof but you might not survive."

"I know."

The response was weak, simple, and timid. Nothing like the self assured hero that Cat saw when Supergirl, or rather Kara, donned her cape.

"Susan, I just want to say thank you for what you did for Alex, and for everything that you've done for me. By the way your mom's cookies are super. They totally made last week bearable. Tell her thanks for me ?"

"Kara"

Of course Kara would know about the family member's of obscure government agents. She'd once let her assistant loose on the second floor where the horribly antisocial IT hobbits existed. Not only did Kara learn each of their names, favorite holidays, and detailed life stories, Kara had spend two hours on a fifteen minute task.

"These comms are recorded right ?"

"You know they are."

"Then just in case."

"Supergirl."

The response carried a tone of warning, of foreboding.

"Just in case."

Kara choked for a moment.

"Just in case, I want you to know, I want everyone to know that this is my choice. That this is no one's fault. I had the chance to let go and save myself. I'm doing this because I love my city, my home and I will do anything to help keep it safe."

There was silence for a moment before Kara started speaking again.

"Kal, I am so proud of you and everything that you have accomplished. I was sent here to protect you, but you were the one that protected me. Your parents would be so proud of you. I love you."

"Eliza, when you took me into your home, I was so small. I had just landed on this planet and I was terrified, scared of everything around me. I was in so much pain and you were and still are warm and welcoming. You've shown me so much kindness. You and your family were the first interaction I had with humans and you made Earth my home. I love you so much. Please, please, please don't hold any of this against Alex. You both have spent so much of your lives protecting me, you've made me feel safe and warm, and loved. You made me feel whole again in a way that I never thought I would and I just want to say I love you. I know that you love me too."

Kara choked in that moment and Cat's hand tightened around the desk. This wasn't an alien, this wasn't a cliched two dimensional hero. This was a daughter saying goodbye to her mother, but it was more than that. This was Kara saying goodbye to the woman that she'd pulled her away from on what could have been their last thanksgiving together.

"Alex."

Kara paused and Cat could imagine that she was crying at this point. She could hear the waver in her voice, the light sniffs and uneven gasps between words. This was deeply personal and she felt sick listening to such a private message.

"Alex, please please know that this is my choice. You've been here for me through so much, everything from my first day of school on this planet to my first job interview. I could have never asked for a better sister and I love you. I know, I know Alex that you love me too. I'm not alone, I have not been alone since I met you."

"Winn, you're my best friend in the world. Thank you for the best two years of my life, I couldn't have asked for a better team than you and James. I couldn't have done any of this without you, you've been with me through every step of the way including making my suit. Thank you."

In that moment Cat mentally ran through all of the ridiculous excuses that James and Winn had both offered to explain Kara's absence through the past six months. It fit uncomfortably well, that her employees were working to keep the secret from her.

"James, you inspired me to stand up for this city and you stayed with me through so much. You've been a friend, a shoulder to lean on when I'm scared, an inspiration."

"Ms. Grant."

Cat felt as if ice had shot through her chest. Five minutes, Kara Danvers had five minutes to address the people that she cared most about.

"These last two years that I've been your assistant have been truly amazing. When we first met I told you that I was average, that there was nothing special about me, but that I wanted to help. You have helped me to grow into the hero that I am today. You've guided me from my first moments. I'm so sorry that I lied to you when you thought that I was Supergirl. I was just so scared that I would lose such a big piece of me. You have been my mentor, and I don't know where I'd be without you. I want to thank you for every opportunity that you've given me over the years, for every time that you have believed in me, for everything that you have done for me."

"Kara, I'm trying. I have yelled at every General that I can contact. I've contacted every agency that I can."

Cat's eyes shot to Lucy, noticing that they were glistening holding back tears, she was irrationally upset that the general had interrupted Kara's goodbye.

"Lucy, we're out of time, there's two minutes left. You've been such a good friend to me. You're going to do so much good for this world, I believe in you."

Kara was crying openly now, it could be heard over the comms.

"Kara there's still time."

"Lucy can you do something for me"

"Anything."

"Stop recording."

The last thing Cat heard was a click and her stomach dropped.

"You didn't get the deactivation code?"

"No, Kara Danvers saved the city this morning."

"That's perfectly heart wrenching Major Lane, however that's not proof that she was with the bomb at the time of detonation."

Somewhere in the traitorous back of her mind a small voice whispered that denial is the first stage of grief.

"I stayed on the comm with her. She flew as far away from land as she could. The last thing I heard was the explosion."

"Get Winn and James. They deserve to know first. From there, we'll compose a public service announcement."

### 3. Chapter 3

Sometimes, only one person is missing, and the whole world seems depopulated."

â€"Alphonse de Lamartine, MÃ©ditations PoÃ©tiques

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><p>"No! This can't be right. She's bulletproof. She's held bombs as they've gone off before. She's okay. She has to be."<p>

Winn's words were rushed and frantic. He inhaled deeply as he shifted to lean forward resting his trebling hands on his thighs. He was seated on one of the two overpriced leather sofas in Cat's office, facing away from the window. James stood behind him in the corner of the room, his left hand wrapped tightly over his mouth, eyes clenched shut.

Lucy understood deeply how the two men were feeling, she was barely holding back the torrent of emotions tearing through her chest. She was seated next to Winn, her positioning served two purposes. She was easily able to control the laptop on the table and she hoped that her closeness would offer her friend comfort. She wasn't sure if James would find any solace in her presence given the circumstances.

Cat sat behind her desk allowing for a brief period of silence as they all struggled to compose themselves. Admittedly even her breath had hitched during the recording, an aching weight caught in her chest as she listened for a second time to what could be Kara's final moments. Every word, every sentiment seemed more pronounced when she knew the ending.

"Winn, she hasn't been found yet. We're doing everything we can to find her but I think that at this point we need to be prepared for the worst. The missile was a prototype contractors with the Navy have been working on. It was meant to mimic the speeds of the BrahMos-II and at the time that Kara intercepted it, it was traveling at Mach 7. While it wasn't nuclear, it was filled with chemical explosives, we believe the timer was a fail-safe in case it didn't explode on impact"

Lucy's stomach twisted in knots as she the words left her mouth. She was so focused on Winn that she missed Cat's eyes narrowing at the new details.

"I...I can't just sit here and do nothing."

Winn seemed to curl into himself, every breath tightly controlled before abruptly slamming his hands forcefully against the glass table.

"Before you break a table that costs more than your monthly salary I would advise you to calm down, Witt."

Cat paused to take a breath collecting her thoughts as she turned to address the room. Taking advantage of the moment Lucy jumped in.

"We have people out looking for her. I promise you, if she's still alive we will find her and we will bring her home." Lucy's voice wavered as she finished her statement. She had known that accepting her new role as leader of the DEO would be difficult, but she had never imagined that she would be in this position.

Cat huffed at being interrupted, she refused to let anyone talk over her; however, this situation was unique. Her assistant had somehow managed to lie to her for months and despite her annoyance at the deception she could only feel fear. There was an emptiness that grew

more pronounced with the thought of coming in the next day and not being met with a smile that rivaled the sun and a notably warm late.

Lucy placed her hand on Winn's knee, wishing that she had more to offer him. Kara for all of her faults was impossibly sweet and had no problem consoling her friend's in their darkest hours.

"Has someone told Alex?"

James's voice was tense, as he scanned the room for a response. Lucy winced and twisted so that she could face him, she hadn't notified Alex yet. She was still working on finding a way to deliver the message to the older Danvers without alerting the DEO to her location. Her silence spoke volumes.

"I can take care of that for her. She deservesâ€¦"

His voice faltered as he took a shuddering breath. James forced himself to make eye contact with Lucy before continuing.

"Alex deserves to know before the press get hold of this."

Cat crossed her arms over her chest and suppressed the urge to inform James that they were the press.

"I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that this is the Alex from the recording that we're addressing. Superman is already aware. Winn, James, you've both been notified, that leaves Eliza Danvers. Does anyone have a way to get in touch with her?"

Lucy turned to face Cat before nodding.

"We have her on a plane now. We thought that Kara should have her family nearby."

"Good. I'll have the Catco helicopter in the air within the hour aiding in the search for Supergirl. I need the last coordinates that she was known to be in. You have our full support in finding her. This is the story that the public will hear. Supergirl saved the city at great risk to herself and now we're all out looking for her. It's our chance to save the hero that saved us while we were sleeping. Today is one of the days that we stand up and show the world the best that we have to offer."

Cat stood from behind her desk and walked over to stand behind the table across from Winn and Lucy while keeping James in her line of sight. She had the full attention of everyone in the room and in a power move continued to outline her plan.

"Lane, we're working together on this. I need to know what I can and cannot say while addressing the public. Normally allowing this kind of oversight from the government would be something that your simpleminded sister would do; however, It would be wrong of me to hinder any investigation or to release information that could endanger National City's hero."

Three seconds later Cat turned her glare to Winn.

"Witt, I need you to set up equipment in my office so that I can make

an emergency announcement. Supergirl is in part Catco's creation and it is my duty to both her and the public to break this story. I will be the one to personally provide any updates that we receive going forward."

Cat then acknowledged her other employee.

" , I need you to do your best to get in touch with the man in blue. If anyone is going to find Supergirl, it's going to be him. No offense to whatever unofficial government agency you are currently working Lucy. Also,"

Cat's voice softened, "if you would like to step out to notify her sister, please do. Let her know that we are all here and as it seems that you are all familiar with her, tell her that she can come here too. If she would like. This is a difficult time for all of us, and she needn't be alone."

Winn was the first to rise, ready for something to do with his hands eager to help. He left wordlessly, followed closely by a stoic James.

James walked to his office his head lowered refusing to make eye contact with any of his colleagues. David, the new doe-eyed photography intern stood to follow him as he passed, stopping mid step as James turned silently shaking his head. He closed and locked the door behind him to ensure privacy.

The walls of his office were covered in awe inspiring photos, shots that he had taken throughout his career that he wanted to keep close; however, there was one that he looked to when he needed to be reminded of hope.

The article was titled "Another Life Saved; Crisis Averted" and was accompanied by his Pulitzer winning photo of Clark flying off into the sun. He stared at his friend as he reached into his pocket for his phone, knowing that the call he was about to make would be difficult.

Deftly he unlocked his device, selected his contacts, and stared at Alex's name wondering what he could say. Words failed him in that moment, still he clicked on her name. As his phone dialed out he felt his heart thundering in his chest, the first ring lasted for an eternity and was followed by two more before, "You've reached Alex, leave a message."

"Alex, call me. It's Kara."

Ending the call and his message, he tried calling again. After his fifth attempt to reach the older Danvers he accepted that she must have turned off her phone while on the run, worried about the DEO tracking her movements.

Going back into his contacts he selected a different name, he didn't expect an answer and was ready when he heard, "This is Clark Kent, you know what to do."

"Clark, it's James. Please, let me know as soon as you have any news on Kara."

Placing his phone back into his pocket he grabbed his camera before jogging out of his office and to the elevator. He had never been one to acknowledge his title however as the Art Director for Catco, he was determined to be in the helicopter as it searched for Supergirl.

"How long have you known that Kara is Supergirl?"

Lucy glanced over at Cat from where she was working on her laptop, using various chat programs to keep in contact with her agents and issue commands. They were working on equipping a standard hospital room with the necessary tools to properly treat Kara. There was no way that she would be able to sneak Alex and J'onn into the DEO's base, so at the suggestion of Cat, they were modifying a room at a local hospital and she would ensure that Agent Vasquez was assigned guard duty in case Supergirl was in need of medical assistance. While it seemed premature, she rationalized the decision by noting that there was another kryptonian on the planet and that at some point in time he may also need emergency care. Having a hospital, and not a secret government base, could certainly come in handy.

Shaking her head to clear her thoughts, she glanced back over at Cat considering the question carefully before answering. Having worked for Cat for months she knew that every question asked held multiple meanings.

"You're asking if I knew while I still worked here and kept that secret from you. For the record I would have kept her secret. No matter what was happening with James, Kara was always sweet and kind. God, I couldn't even hate her when I wanted to."

Her answer seemed to anger Cat, who stood squaring her shoulders over her desk and glaring with steel in her eyes.

"Stop speaking about Kara as if she's dead. There's still a chance that she's still alive and if she is she's coming home. It's our job to ensure that this city does not fall apart in her absence and that it's ready for her when she returns."

Cat took a hefty swig of scotch emptying her glass. Standing she walked over to her pitcher and filled the cup with water. She needed to have as clear a head to report on any new developments. Her emergency broadcast regarding the downed hero was playing on a loop behind her and on most media channels while #SaveSupergirl was trending on twitter.

The missing hero seemed to be the only newsworthy story worth playing. Various news agencies were capitalizing on the opportunity; however, with the help of Major Lane, Cat had ensured that CatCo was leading in the ratings. The shock value of tragedy always drew viewers in and in the wake of Supergirl's absence citizens needed to feel close to their protector. There was a fresh desire to know all that they could about her.

"They're still searching for her. I have high hopes that they will bring her home. Kara has never failed me and I doubt that she will start now. So tell me, why do you keep assuming the worst?"

"I lied to her"

Lucy stated blankly staring at monitor behind Cat. Blinking the queen of all media faltered. She was rarely surprised; however, she was not expecting Lucy's answer.

"I'm sorry?"

There was an upwards inflection at the end of Cat's statement, the intonation almost phrasing it as a question. In reality it was a demand that Lucy elaborate.

"Kara, I lied to her when she was holding the missile. After She asked me to stop recording I promised her that it would be alright. I swore that she would come home and that she would see everyone again. I had no way of knowing if anything that I said was true.

Lucy's face contorted with emotion in that moment Cat saw the weight that had been placed on the younger Lane's shoulders. She reminded herself that for hours while she had been sleeping Lucy had worked to organize search parties, investigate a missile launch, and likely had forgone basic human needs.

"You stayed on the line with her Lucy. You made sure that she wasn't alone and gave whatever hope to her that you could."

"I lied to my friend, she trusted me."

"I've already told you and I do not like to repeat myself; however, given the events of today I am willing to make an exception this once. Stop speaking about Kara Danvers as if she is dead."

Cat's tone left no room for argument as she moved to stand in front of Lucy.

"I don't know what military agency you work for and quite frankly I do not care. You clearly haven't slept in over twenty four hours. You need to eat, drink, and rest. You'll be of no use to any of us if you're too exhausted to help protect her and her family when she returns. If you must, you can sleep here, I promise to alert you as soon as any news comes in."

Lucy shook her head.

"I can rest once we've found her"

Narrowing her eyes Cat chose her battle.

"If you refuse to take basic care of yourself, fine. That said, I will not have you passing out in my office from low blood sugar. I'm sending Dennis out for salads and coffee. Lunch is nonnegotiable."

In a motel six just outside of Central City Alex packed her tactical gear, preparing to join the search for Kara. She and J'onnn had been meeting with one of J'onnn's contacts, an alien that he'd saved early in his career at the DEO. They'd hoped to gain intel on project Cadmus. There had been rumors that he had worked at the facility and with more information regarding the layout it would be easier to infiltrate. The mission had been placed on hold when, after paying with cash for their motel room, Alex turned on the Television to see Cat Grant's solemn face.

She immediately powered up her phone, dialing Kara's number. When her sister didn't answer years of training was all that kept her grounded and instantly Alex thought to check her voicemail. There was a possibility that Kara had already been fished out of the ocean. Knowing the DEO it was likely that she would be in debrief for hours.

"You have twenty seven new messages."

Alex's jaw tensed at the slow speed of the automated voice.

"First new message from contact Kara on March sixteenth."

The next voice Alex heard was Kara's, "Alex, I know you just left but I already miss you. Please be safe and tell J'onn to be safe too. I love you."

Her impatience lessened as she felt a rush of warmth, saving the message Alex played through the others. Kara had left her twenty six messages all providing updates on their friends, wishing her and J'onn well, and declaring that she loved them both. Shaking her head, Alex felt herself smiling, of course Kara would leave twenty six messages.

Finally she played the last message. It was James, from earlier that morning sounding defeated. Alex immediately attempted to call him back her stomach churning as she was forwarded to his voicemail.

"I'm going to join the search for her Alex. I will do everything that I can to bring her home."

J'onn had finally pulled his eyes away from the TV and was staring at her intently.

"J'onn, she's my sister. If you think for one second that I am not going to be out there searching for her, you're forgetting everything you know about me."

She saw his eye twitch the way it always did when she volunteered to head a dangerous mission.

"Alex, it's too dangerous for you right now."

If Kara hadn't been the only thing on her mind she would have reveled in her ability to read her boss, the mind reading alien. She crossed her arms over her chest, widened her stance, and blocked the path to the door thanking whoever it was that had designed every motel room ever to have only one access point.

"You're going"

He didn't even flinch.

"Of course I'm going. I made a promise to your father that I would protect his daughters, both of them."

"I made a promise to my father, to my mother, to my sister, and to myself that I would never let anything happen to her. There have been

days that I have failed in that promise, but this won't be one of them."

His stance softened as he searched her mind to find only determination to save Kara, it worried him. He had personally trained Alex and was well aware of the extent that she would go to in order to protect those that she cared for. Early on at the DEO when she began running missions she had gone to great lengths to save teammates regardless of risk to herself.

"Alex"

"I'm going, whether it's with you, or if I have to turn myself in to the DEO and make that my only condition."

Before she could continue her phone rang, ensuring that she was blocking the only exit Alex answered the phone without breaking eye contact with J'onn.

"Alex?"

The voice was familiar and although she hadn't spoken with him in years she immediately recognized who was on the line.

"Clark."

She watched J'onn's face fill with hope and fear, mirroring her own.

"I found her."

#### 4. Chapter 4

Thu-dub. Thu-dub. Thu-dub Thu-

Alex's heartbeat raged in her ears, she was sure that if she placed her hands on her chest she would feel her heart slamming against it. Her mouth was dry, but her voice never wavered. She was already running through all of the questions that she desperately needed answered.

"Where is she? What is her status? Can I talk to her?"

There was a strangled period of silence that Alex measured using her own frantic heartbeat.

"She's alive, I'm waiting for a medivac copter. With her injuries I don't want to move her without a backboard for support."

Alex's eyes met J'onn's, his concern mirrored her own.

"Where are you now?"

"Floating in the Pacific, She'll need you to be here as soon as you can."

Mentally she thanked J'onn for the ramifications that he'd ordered to Kara's suit months earlier when they'd first fished her out of the ocean.

"I'm already on my way to National City. Are they taking her back to the DEO base?"

Alex was already running through plans to break into the DEO as she asked the question. Vasquez, Hernandez, and Dr. Hamilton all still owed her favors.

"No. I've been in communication with Agent Vasquez, Director Lane has arranged for a hospital room to be modified at National City General Hospital for Kryptonians"

That was at least one problem solved.

"How is she?"

"Injured badly, I believe that she blew out her powers in the explosion. I can see multiple fractures in her legs but I'm more concerned about the fracture that I see in her spine."

Clark, Kal El, didn't say anything about the prolonged pause as Alex wrapped her mind around the severity of Kara's injuries.

"She's broken bones before during a solar flare Superman, once her powers return, she should heal completely. She'll be in a lot of pain while her powers recharged but she'll recover."

Again, her voice was steady. It didn't waver or show the overwhelming fear and guilt that was rushing through her.

"I can already hear the helicopter for the medivac, it should be here in less than two minutes Alex. Get here as soon as you can. You'll be one of the first people she asks for when she wakes up. From what I've been told Eliza is already on her way."

Nodding, then realizing that Superman couldn't see the movement Alex looked over at J'onn. With his ability to read minds she was sure that he knew exactly what her plan was. Clark's voice derailed her train of thought.

"I'd come and get you, but I can't leave her like this Alex."

"No, she needs to have someone by her side. El miara, stronger together. I'm here with J'onn, I think we know of a way to get to where you are. Please tell Kara that I love her and that I am on my way."

"It'll be the first thing I say."

She could hear warmth and kindness in his voice and felt a rush of gratitude.

"Thank you."

Throughout her her childhood, her time as Kara's older sibling, and her training in the DEO Alex learned the tact of stating exactly what needed to be said, and stopping there. While the two words were supported under a confident tone, J'onn knew that had she continued her voice would have broke under the roller coaster of emotions that she hadn't allowed herself to process.



"Of course. You said it yourself El miara."

J'onn had in her training drilled into Alex that her first priority was to control the situation, ensure that Kara was safe. Once they established Supergirl was out of immediate danger they would endeavor to keep her that way. Clark had confirmed her status, she was alive. The next step would be to protect her and help her heal.

"I'll see you soon."

"Goodbye Alex, take care."

Hanging up the phone Alex tossed it on the bed before crossing her arms defiantly over her chest. An update on Kara's status was unnecessary they were both well aware that he'd paid deliberate attention to not only the words Superman had uttered but the emotional response they kindled in Alex. He was aware of her plan to get to national city. While there was a great chance that it would work he was concerned for her well being if it did not.

"I'm not comfortable with this plan Alex, it's reckless. Think of what can go wrong."

"Kara has a broken spine J'onn, along with multiple fractures in her legs. I'm assuming at the speed that she impacted the water there are also internal injuries due to the shock and trauma. Right now she is floating in the Pacific. I need to be with her, she's my sister."

"I understand; however, there has to be a safer way to get to National City. This is dangerous. If someone see's us-"

"They'll see Superman flying with a human that he rescued. Clark is going to stay with Kara, he'll be out of sight. Kara will need us both to protect her, she's always felt safer around you."

Even if his powers did not work on Kara, J'onn was certain that Alex was exaggerating however he could not argue with the point that Kara would be in a vulnerable state while she regained her powers. With the active threats in national city she would undoubtedly be safer under his protection. J'onn relented, he could feel the weight of Kara's injuries on Alex's shoulders as well as his own.

"We'll try it your way Agent Danvers."

\* \* \*

><p>Cat Grant was buried under paperwork. With Supergirl missing every station wanted rights to play her broadcast. While she had an entire legal department to handle such matters all final decisions were made by her. In addition to the tremendous amount of work that had been added to her normal day, it seemed that her Art Director James Olsen had bullied his way onto the Catco helicopter in order to help aid in the search for Supergirl delaying her layouts for the next week. The worst part was the difficulty she was having with focusing on her daily tasks.<p>

She found herself glancing at her assistant's empty desk multiple times between every sentence that she read. If she were being honest with herself, she had gotten no work done in the last forty seven

minutes.

"Cat, they've found her!"

The words that she had been waiting to hear were shouted excitedly from the couch where Lucy sat hunched over a laptop. Cat was well aware that baby Lane had been instant messaging her agents in order to keep tabs on the situation and continue to run her paramilitary organization.

"Superman found her. She was floating in the Pacific."

As Lucy said those words Cat released a breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding. Her chest was lighter, in fact the entire room seemed brighter for a moment. It was such a sentimental notion, rationally Cat wrote it off as a cloud that had shifted allowing sunlight to pour directly through her window. As quickly as her spirits soared, reality bit into her once more, ice chilling her spine. There had been no confirmation of life. She had years of experience reporting in on similar cases, Cat knew well enough what that meant.

Lucy watched the parade of emotions march across Cat's darkening face.

"She's alive Cat, her supersuit functions as a wetsuit. We've fished her out of the water before and after the last time some modifications were made. Her suit functioned to keep her warm to prevent hypothermia and it also is the reason that she was able to float, that and the fact that salt water is dense or at least more dense than freshwater."

Allowing herself to breath Cat walked over to her balcony, taking a moment to gaze over the citizens that Supergirl had saved.

"Thank you Lucy. How is she?"

"I'm not sure, the report states that they've found her and that she's called a nearby helicopter for a medical evac. We'll know more soon. I'm going to go tell Winn."

As damning as that news felt, Cat rested a hand over her heart reveling in the warmth of the sun on her face. The solar radiation that she knew would be doing wonders for Kara. She steeled herself, come what may Supergirl would recover and thrive. She would see to it personally and Cat Grant never accepted defeat.

As the helicopter touched down in an unfamiliar field Eliza watched as agents in matching black uniforms maneuvered around her, guiding her towards a black SUV with tinted windows.

\* \* \*

><p>"Dr. Danvers?"<p>

A young woman that she would guess was slightly older than Alex with shorter hair appeared in front of her.

"My name is Susan. I know that you're uncomfortable with the DEO and I wanted to meet you here. I'm going to be standing guard at Kara's

hospital room as well, I'll keep you both safe Ma'am."

"Thank you Susan."

The informality of using her first name was not lost on Eliza, she hadn't heard a first name uttered the entire flight. This agent was attempting to cater to her needs, going beyond strictly following orders. Agents Smith, Kennedy, and Walker all had introduced themselves in an almost robotic manner uttering their orders with practiced precision.

Susan stepped toward the car; however, before she opened the door she made direct eye contact with Eliza.

"We are going to be traveling directly to the hospital that Supergirl is being transported to. I can have my agents meet us there with any food or beverages that you would like, ma'am. I understand that given the unique situation as you are one of the leading experts in the field you will be assisting with Supergirl's care."

"I think you're confusing me with my daughter Alex."

She noticed a brief frown cross over the agent's face, seconds later it was gone before she could question it.

"You raised Supergirl for five years. Apart from Agent Danvers, no one here is going to be a better judge of what the baseline for her vitals will be."

"Then we should probably be going. Oh, and Susan?"

Susan paused in the middle of opening the door turning to make eye contact with Agent Danver's mother.

"Please call me Eliza."

They sit next to each other in the car, Eliza tense staring ahead with Susan noticing the tension in her shoulders and face. The worry of a mother for two daughters not knowing the fate of either. She had always been a woman of action, it's what led her to the military. It's what fueled her exemplary service and ultimately how she wound up at the DEO and in that moment Susan Vasquez acted.

"One of the first times that I met Supergirl, she was on the base during my lunch break. Imagine, being trained to hunt down aliens with superior strength, speed, some with unimaginable powers. We were wary of her at first. Not Agent Danvers, of course. But the rest of us, we had no idea what to think of her."

Eliza turned sharply, her eyes boring into agent Vasquez with a dangerous expression on her face. It was somewhere between ferocious and protective still Susan pressed on knowing that she'd find comfort in the story.

"I'm completely alone in the break room eating lunch and suddenly she's at my table. I blinked and there she was, cape and all. I wasn't who she was expecting to find and she looked down at me with-with these guilt ridden eyes and raises her hands in front of her before stepping back slowly. We were still getting used to her at the time and I think she thought she scared me."

Susan laughed, still aware of Eliza's ill tempered gaze.

"She apologized, profusely. Then she explained that my mother's cookies smelled just like the cookies that her foster mom used to make. She hadn't had them in months and she told me it was the longest she'd gone without seeing you. She was excited at the scent and thought maybe agent Danvers had gotten some."

At the mention of cookies Eliza's edges had softened and her eyes had misted.

"What happened next?"

"I offered her a cookie."

"You didn't."

" I did. I've been bringing her a weekly bag of baked goods ever since. My mother's thrilled at the thought of baking for Supergirl, she has no idea what I do but she knows it's dangerous. I think she finds it comforting to know that someone like her is out there looking out for someone like me."

"Thank you."

They rode the rest of the way in a companionable silence.

\* \* \*

><p>The light around her was blinding, too bright for her to begin to decipher the shapes of her immediate surroundings. Blinking she tried to sit up. A wave of white hot agonizing pain overpowered all of her. Each breath was spasmodic, the slightest movement amplifying the unbearable torment.<p>

She felt a pressure on her forehead, opening her eyes she saw the silhouette of a hand as it firmly pressed her back to the bed.

"Shh, my daughter. You need to rest. You were badly injured."

With herculean effort she blinked, willing the blurred vision to come into focus. She swore she'd heard her mother's voice. All she was aware of in that moment was the overbearing pain and the presence of what felt like her mother's hand. Nothing on Earth had offered her that level of comfort.

"Mother?"

Her voice felt raw and breathy, but the apparition responded to her kindly.

"Yes Kara? I am here. You need to rest."

"It hurts."

"I know. The pain will lessen. Give it time."

Slowly the edges of her vision began to darken. Defying her body she struggled to move, reaching out for the presence of the woman that

had raised her for the first thirteen years of her life. A female form was the last thing she saw.

\* \* \*

><p>Alex had prepared herself throughout the flight of the possibilities regarding Kara's status. Clark had called them and spoken briefly over the phone. It'd been hard to hear his voice over the roaring wind, he had not complained once about repeating himself.<p>

He had been right and there had been various fractures in her vertebra. They had done their best to ensure that her legs were set, and had opted to splint both of Kara's legs rather than use plaster casts under the assumption that once she absorbed enough solar radiation her healing factor would kick in. She'd briefly patched in with Dr. Hamilton who ran advised her that they had been focusing mainly on stabilization and pain management.

J'onn and Alex had both known that due to the publicity associated with Supergirl's disappearance that entering the hospital would be difficult. They landed three blocks away in an alley, J'onn tactfully slipping away and shifting to take the form of a child with Alex grudgingly wearing her wig.

They weren't even on the radar of the media crew, and it appeared that Hospital Security was refusing to even let the media in the door. Alex easily lifted J'onn so that he was resting on her hip as she shuffled past a security guard, smiling lightly as he opened the door for her. She was prepared to explain that her son had a high fever if anyone had taken the trouble of asking her why she was entering.

"It's a hospital Alex, it's bad enough that they have to deal with a media circus. They aren't going out of their way to interrogate family members of people that are sick."

J'onn's voice was low, the words whispered in her ear as they stepped into the elevator.

"Who do you think they are going to have guarding her?"

She asked, grateful that they were the only people in the elevator.

"I can handle whoever it is."

It was a promise that she would see her sister and between J'onn and Clark, Alex was sure that no one was willing to challenge them on it.

"Thank you J'onn."

"I care for her too."

"I know you do."

Alex wasn't sure which room Kara was in until they stepped off the elevator, all Clark had said was floor 5. Only one room had an armed guard in a full tactical uniform standing guard in front of it.

Approaching Alex steeled her face, J'onn had said to leave the fighting to him but she was almost daring Hernandez to stop her.

"Agent Danvers, I'm so sorry."

His tone was remorseful as he reached to open the door for her. Stepping back preparing for a fight she almost didn't catch his next statement.

"I am here strictly under the order to neutralize any threats there might be to Supergirl."

She hadn't been expecting that, and paused knowing that he would understand and provide clarification. With all of the time that they'd spent in the field together, they'd grown accustomed to communicating nonverbally.

"Director Lane. She has ensured that at all times it will either be Agent Vasquez or myself on the protection detail for Supergirl although we pale in comparison to him."

As she stepped through the threshold she placed J'onn on the ground. The room was larger than she had been expecting with a window, small arm chair, Kara's hospital bed, and the DEO solar lamps. The strong odor of antiseptics assaulted her nose.

Kal El stood at Kara's bedside his shoulders slumped, eyes red, a thin frown on his face. Nevertheless it was Superman, in full uniform, red cape draped over his drooped shoulders. When she was a child she had thought that Superman was impossibly tall, almost larger than life. Every time that she'd seen him since that same thought ran through her mind. Even in the hospital room he didn't seem to fit. He seemed too large, the colors of his uniform stark standing out against the pale white of the walls and sheets.

"Clark?"

"Alex! I'm glad you're here. She will be too. Thank you for coming so quickly."

"How is she?"

Alex asked racing quickly towards Kara. Her sister, her little sister, the only other time that she'd seen Kara the same hue of grey was under the influence of the black mercy. As she approached the bed, she felt a distinct rise in temperature from the solar lamps that they had Kara under. It seemed appropriate, she'd always felt warmer the closer she stood to Kara.

"They currently have her on dilaudid for the pain, when we first arrived she woke up screaming. she was in agony."

His voice was earnest and she could see in his eyes how torn up he was over Kara's pain. Given the extent of her injuries Alex had been prepared for this situation. Gently she placed her hand on Kara's forehead before bringing it to rest on Kara's cheek. She struggled to suppress a sob growing in her chest, one that both Clark and J'onn still heard.

She didn't noticed that he had transformed back into the form of Hank Henshaw until both men came to stand beside her placing comforting hands on either of her shoulders.

"She will recover Alex."

Hank's voice was soothing, as was his presence. In her mind Alex was incredibly grateful there was not a safer place in the city than Kara's hospital room between the protection of the DEO, Superman, and J'onn Jonzz. He had to have been reading her mind, she watched the edge of his lips tilt upwards before looking forlornly back down at Kara's prone figure.

Even in her sleep her face was contorted with pain, lips twisted down, eyes forcefully closed.

Alex walked to the foot of the bed taking Kara's chart into her own hands wanting to know exactly what was wrong, the intent to patch her sister back together at the forefront of her mind. This is how she'd felt during the black mercy, this helpless terror eating away from within her paired with a desperate need to be close.

The first thing that stood out was Kara's temperature, in her mind she knew that Kryptonians typically ran hotter than humans. Since working at the DEO she'd noticed that Kara's temperature was typically between 102 and 103 degrees Fahrenheit. According to the chart in her hand Kara was running a low grade fever of 105.

She continued to read. As a result of the fall Supergirl had axial burst fractures on the thoracolumbar junction in vertebrae T11 T12 and L1, as well as various fractures in her right femur, tibia, and fibula, and calcaneus as well as her left calcaneus and fibula.

"Alex."

Clark's voice rang out as his arms engulfed her. Awkwardly she adjusted to return the embrace wrapping her arms around his back. As her cheek was pressed into his chest she felt moisture on her face and realized that she had been crying. Without meaning to she dropped the chart flinching as she heard it clamor against the floor

"She's much stronger than she looks Alex, she always has been. You know that. We'll make sure that she gets through this."

"You're staying?"

"There's nowhere else I'd rather be. I've already called Lois, she offered to come. She remembers Kara from the summers that she interned at the Planet."

"Is Lois coming?"

"I promised her that I'd let her know if we needed her but I have a feeling this hospital room is about to become pretty crowded."

"She does have a way of forcing her way into your heart."

J'onn said from Kara's side, peering over Alex noted that he'd taken

her hand.

"Let me see what I can do about finding some chairs for us. What's the point in super strength if I can't help out?"

Clark smiled, finally releasing Alex and she instantly found herself missing the physical contact. Normally that was Kara's song and dance however she was not above admitting that the presence of both Kal El and J'onn was comforting beyond words.

Walking to stand next to J'onn she stared down at the dark bruising on Kara's arm noting that it could have been the result of anything. Debris from the explosion, the impact to the water, even a DEO agent hastily attempting to situate her in the helicopter for transport.

"Aaaaaahh!"

Kara's hiss of pain erupted before Alex even had the chance to take her sister's hand. Before either herself or J'onn could anticipate the movement Kara jerked forward attempting to sit up before falling softly against the hospital bed. The abrupt and jarring movements causing spasms of pain to radiate throughout Kara's lower half. Alex watched as Kara's fingers dug into the sheets arms tense.

"Oww...Oww.. AHHH!"

Kara's face grew red, her eyes opening slightly, tears pooling freely as she screamed. Alex leaned forward pressing the Nurse Call button before steadying Kara. Leaning over her sister she placed both hands over Kara's shoulders applying only enough force to keep her in place, her head only inches above the blonde's.

"Kara you're okay. You're going to be okay. I know it hurts, but I'm here. Okay? I'm right here and a nurse is going to come in any minute and give you some awesome painkillers."

Slowly Kara's cries lowered in volume to whimpers her breaths still coming in untimed gasps.

"I'm going to make sure that a nurse is coming with pain medication, she should be due for another dose."

Writing off J'onn's clairvoyance as him having read the nurse's mind as they were walking in Alex forced her full attention on Kara. The hero seemed to have noticed her presence and was taking short staggered breaths while staring at her with eyes that were blue wells.

"A-Al-ex?"

"Yeah Kar, I'm right here, Okay? Focus on my voice. A nurse is about to come in here and give you a large dose of Dilaudid but until then just breath with me okay? You're hurt and you need to stay still. Just breath."

"Y-ou're. H-ere. Not. S-afe.."

Kara struggled to speak, formulating her words through strangled



gasps her face still trained on Alex, large tears streaking down her cheeks.

"I'm not going anywhere."

Right as she said that Hank, Superman, and a heavyset nurse in blue scrubs rushed in. Behind the door Alex caught a glimpse of Lucy standing with Hernandez. Making a note to go speak with the director later she tried to pull away from Kara to give the nurse room to work.

"No."

After her outburst Kara closed her eyes, bit her lips, and took a deep breath. The nurse smiled warmly at Kara.

"She'll stay right here Supergirl. I'm just going to give you your dose of pain medication. Your next will be in four hours. I know it hurts but you'll feel better soon. With this type of injury we're working to get you a pump that you can use to release a smaller dose every six minutes. We're thinking that might be more effective for your pain management. We're only waiting on approval from your doctor. I'm also giving you Tylenol through the IV. "

Kara didn't respond though, instead she focused her eyes back on Alex.

"Thank you, ma'am."

J'onn smiled softly at her before walking over to where Superman stood looking defeated with a cot over his shoulder, and an armchair that matched the pink one in the room. J'onn rolled the chair over next to Alex silently leaving it behind his agent so that she wouldn't need to leave Supergirl's side for a moment.

He then walked over to the other side of Kara, Clark joining him. Her breathing was evening out.

"Hey, you came."

Clark smiled gently at Kara, reaching a hand down to cup her cheek maneuvering expertly around Alex.

"Of course. I'm right here Kara. So is Alex and J'onn."

Making his presence known J'onn softly took Kara's left hand.

"You've been through quite a bit in the last few hours Supergirl. You should rest."

"It hurts."

Her voice broke every heart in the room.

"I know Kara, but it won't soon."

More than anything Alex wanted to help ease Kara's pain, but she knew that there was not much that she could do. She moved her right hand to hold Kara's staying mindful of her IV. She gently ran her left

through her sister's tangled hair. Immediately Kara winced, and Alex moved as if she'd been burned.

"I"

Before Alex could apologize Superman stepped in to explain.

"The doctors were concerned with the impact that she might have a concussion."

Alex thought that she was going to throw up.

"Alex it's okay."

Hank supplied and as if to back him up Kara squeezed her hand. Before anything else could be said Hank and Clark both shifted their eyes to the door.

"What?"

"Your mother is here."

J'onn supplied quietly, and Alex gulped staring at Kara. She had failed in the one thing that her parents had tasked her to do. Keep Kara safe.

"No you didn't Alex, she's not thinking that."

"J'onn."

"She doesn't blame you."

His firm words did little to sooth Alex's nerves as she watched the door swing open. She braced herself in anticipation as her mother walked in. Her hair was pulled back in a loose ponytail, her eyes were red, simultaneously she was the most terrifying and comforting presence Alex could imagine.

Two steps in Eliza noticed the chart on the floor and bent to pick it up, Alex kicked herself for having forgotten it was there.

"Eliza?"

Kara's voice was barely a whisper but instantly the chart was placed in the holster at the foot of the bed and Eliza was standing close to Alex, her hand reaching down to caress Kara's cheek.

"Kara. I'm right here. How are you sweetie?"

Kara smiled softly squeezing Alex's hand again before letting go. Glancing between her foster mother and sister she whispered, "Alex needs a hug."

\* \* \*

><p>I did my best to capture the sensation of being completely helpless when someone you love is writhing in pain. Sorry for the delay with this chapter, I wasn't sure how to approach Kara's injuries and I kept getting stuck. My roommate is actually the one

who broke through the writer's block for this.<p>

Cat, James, and Winn will be featured more in the next chapter. Tell me what you think :)

End  
file.